

**MONTANA LAW ENFORCEMENT  
ACADEMY**

Division of Criminal Investigation

**2019 Annual Report**



## ***From the Administrator***

Since 1959, the Montana Law Enforcement Academy has provided entry level and advanced training to Montana's state, county, city, and tribal law enforcement agencies. Public perception, the need for transparency, jail and prison overcrowding, mental health and substance abuse addictions, human trafficking, staffing shortages and simple economics are challenging public safety agencies across the country and Montana. New business practices bring new training needs.

As with every year, 2019 brought new challenges and opportunities to the Academy as we continued providing exceptional education to public safety personnel in our basic and professional development programs. We continue in our mission to provide an atmosphere where all law enforcement and public safety professionals can participate in programs enhancing their knowledge, honing their skills, and developing the foundation of their ability to meet the ever changing needs of the communities they serve.



If you have additional questions, please feel free to call me at 406-444-9957 or email: [gstinar@mt.gov](mailto:gstinar@mt.gov)

Sincerely,

Glen Stinar, *Administrator*

Montana Law Enforcement Academy

## ***Legal Authority***

Montana Code Annotated § 44-10-102 establishes a Montana Law Enforcement Academy “to provide Montana law enforcement officers and other qualified individuals with a means of securing training in the field of law enforcement.”

In addition, Mont. Code Ann. § 44-10-202 directs the Department of Justice to produce an annual report on the Academy's activities and provide a copy to the Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State.

## Our Mission

The mission of the Montana Department of Justice Law Enforcement Academy is to serve law enforcement agencies and the communities they represent by providing a positive atmosphere where relevant and realistic training for new and veteran public safety professionals occurs.

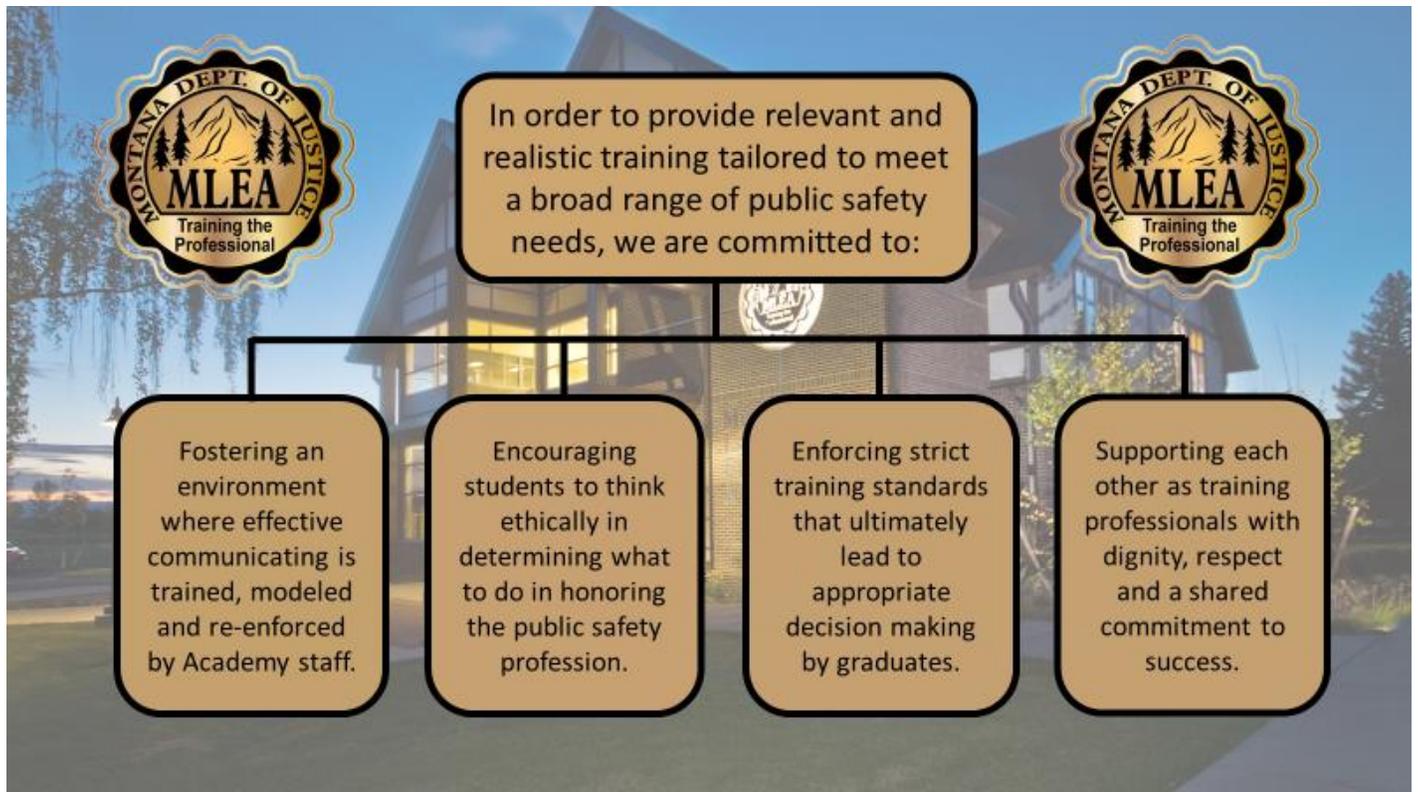
## Core Values

The core values of the Academy are *honor, pride, integrity, duty, loyalty,* and *service.*

## Areas of Focus in Support of Our Mission Statement

We believe in order to achieve mission success four key areas of focus must be achieved by all Academy staff and adjunct instructors;

- 1 – **Fostering** an environment where effective communicating is trained, modeled and re-enforced.
- 2 – **Encouraging** students to think ethically in determining what to do.
- 3 – **Enforcing** strict training standards that ultimately lead to appropriate decision making.
- 4 – **Supporting** each other as professionals with dignity, respect and a shared commitment to success.



## *Law Enforcement Academy Staff and Facilities*

In 1997, the Academy moved from Bozeman to the 20-acre Mountain View School in the north Helena valley. The Academy owns and leases two additional agricultural tracts totaling 184 acres. The campus has 14 buildings and an overall footprint of roughly 104,000 square feet. These structures include offices, pump houses, storage, classrooms, conference rooms, dormitory rooms, gymnasium, maintenance shop and a cafeteria that serves nearly 50,000 meals per year. The oldest structure was built in 1922 and the newest was built in 2019. Four dormitory style buildings provide a 106-bed residential



capacity. Other major structures include two wells, one water tower with a 66,000-gallon capacity and a wastewater treatment facility with three lagoons and a 2.8-million-gallon capacity.

Thanks to the efforts of DOJ staff working with the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the Montana Legislature a portion of the Temporary Registration Permit (TRP) fee collected by the Motor Vehicle Division at the time of purchase of certain vehicles as outlined in MCA 61-3-224 is now being transferred to the Academy's special revenue account. The new TRP fee collections have substantially improved revenue flow to Academy operations. As a result, long overdue improvements to training and infrastructure occurred in 2018 and continued in 2019.

The 66<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session also approved 6.5 million dollars for dormitory and cafeteria remodel projects as outlined in a master plan which was developed by State Architecture and Engineering staff. In 2018 construction plans were finalized and in January of 2019 remodeling began. When complete in the fall of 2020, three dorm buildings built in the 1920's and totaling 36,339 square feet will have been remodeled increasing the Academy's ability to house students from 106 to 136 beds.



The cafeteria, built in 1967, will be enlarged and modernized to meet current Academy food service and seating needs. Six new offices and a conference room will be added to the Ohs Education building.

The Academy has 14 full time equivalents (FTEs):

- ❖ 1 Administrator
- ❖ 1 Assistant Attorney General
- ❖ 7 Training and Development Specialists
- ❖ 1 Operations Manager
- ❖ 2 Maintenance Workers
- ❖ 1 Custodian
- ❖ 1 Administrative Assistant



In 2019 the Academy also had one modified position. A risk

management trainer jointly funded by a bi-annual MOU with the Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority and the Montana Association of Counties specialized in delivering curriculum relevant to reducing liability for public safety officers and agencies in Montana.

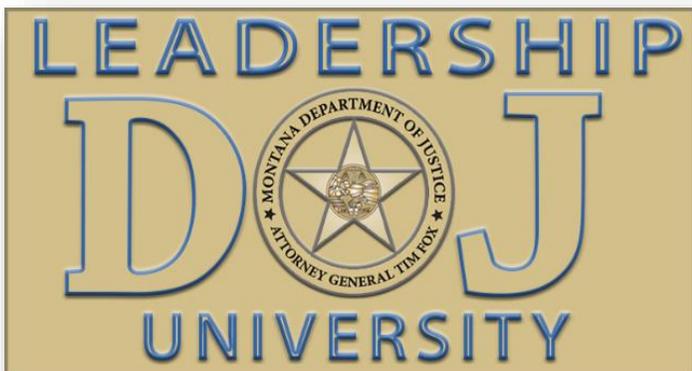


*Training Officer Mike McCarthy testifies at a coroner's inquest in Billings.*

In addition to acting as coaches, mentors, evaluators and trainers for students, training staff are routinely asked to perform other duties that include testifying at coroner's inquests, sitting on state boards, developing model policies and conducting training for agencies statewide.

## Academy Highlights

1 - The Academy hosted the third annual Department of Justice University (DOJ U). Based on the Montana Law



Enforcement Academy's 160-hour Executive Leadership Institute, this 24-hour course is divided into two areas: discovering personal strengths and leading others. The purpose of DOJ U is to provide an opportunity for employees to acquire additional training and leadership skills. Through sharing experiences and learning new concepts, a more common picture of DOJ's vision, mission and goals will be developed across the Department. The course

was held in September and 26 students attended. This innovative project conducted by Department of Justice staff is an ongoing efficiency goal, saving thousands of dollars by conducting the training with qualified in-house instructors.

2 – The Junior Police Leadership Academy (JPLA) is a great summer addition to Academy programs each July. JPLA is a seven-day camp funded by the Montana Association of Chiefs of Police. The goal of the program is to bring high school students from around the state together to spend the week with Officers, Sheriff’s Deputies and Highway Patrol Troopers. Students learn about various aspects of law enforcement, the value of teamwork and being leaders in their communities. Some eventually become peace officers in Montana.



3 – In observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month each October, the Academy hosted the Montana Silent Witness exhibit. The exhibit features over 100 red silhouettes, each memorializing a victim. Established in 1999, the Montana Silent Witness Initiative goal is to promote successful community-based domestic violence reduction efforts in order to reach zero domestic murders by 2020. Students state that this exhibit, which includes the names of the victims, brings to life the importance of the work they do.



4 – In conjunction with the Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority and Montana Association of Counties, in the fall of 2018 the Academy hosted a one-day law enforcement strategic planning meeting. Volunteers from the group and Academy staff continued in 2019 to develop a statewide officer wellness policy. In December, the policy was completed and contained developing proactive wellness programs, individual and supervisory responsibilities, fitness for duty evaluations, peer support programs, recommendations for schedules and limitations on hours worked, stress management and intervention, employee counseling and referral services, personnel early warning systems, Chaplain programs, family support programs, employee annual training, pre-employment screening and probationary employment periods. The policy will be available on the Academy's web page for agencies statewide.

5 – The Academy and students attending basic programs have been avid supporters of Special Olympics Polar Plunge and Torch Run for several years and 2019 was no exception.

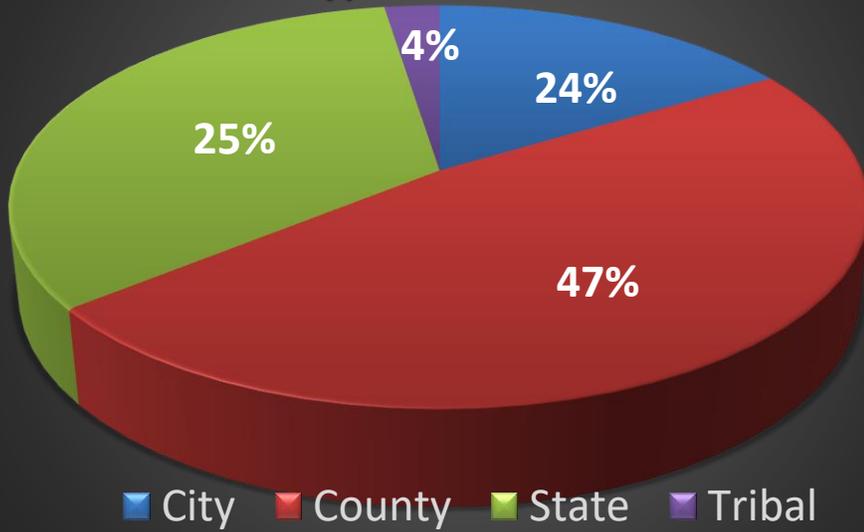
In November, students and staff organized an Academy Polar Plunge event to raise funds for Special Olympics. Both law enforcement and corrections / detention students participated. (picture right). Academy students raised over \$10,000 and participated with athletes in the state games held in Great Falls.



### **Academy Basic Programs in 2019**

By law, peace officers are required to attend a Montana Public Safety Officers Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) approved basic course within 12 months of the date of hire. The Montana Law Enforcement Academy is the only P.O.S.T. certified location for basic courses in the state and responsible for providing education and training to entry-level law enforcement and public safety officers throughout Montana. The Academy accomplishes this by conducting several different basic courses. The law enforcement and public safety officers originate from agencies statewide including state, county, city and tribal organizations. The three basic programs Academy staff are responsible for are the **Law Enforcement Officer Basic Course**, **Corrections /Detention Officer Basic Course** and the **Public Safety Communicators Course**. The Montana Department of Corrections also conducts a 10-week residential **Adult Probation and Parole Basic Course** at the Academy each year. Academy training and support staff are involved in this course as well. New in 2019 was a **Pretrial Services & Misdemeanor Probation Basic Course**.

**Basic Course Attendance by Agency Type - All Courses**

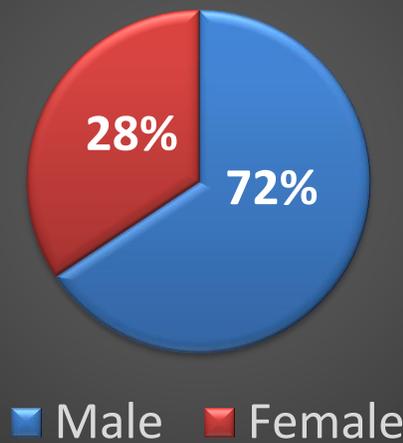


The **Law Enforcement Officer Basic Course** is the longest residential course at 12 weeks in length. Traditionally the Academy conducts three of these courses each year. In 2019 the Academy conducted four courses, two of which ran concurrently. The extra course was scheduled to reduce long wait lists. This was challenging for Academy staff to manage and they performed exemplary. Total student count for this course in 2019 was 198.

**Corrections/Detention Officer Basic Course** is the second longest residential course at the Academy. Six courses were conducted in 2019, training 213 personnel. This basic course continues to be the highest demand program the Academy conducts.

At four weeks in length, the

**Basic Course Attendance by Gender - All Courses**



The Academy conducts three **Public Safety Communicator Basic Courses** per year. This course is designed for dispatchers who work in 911 centers throughout the state. The curriculum increased from one to two weeks in length in 2017 and was the first major overhaul of the course since its inception in 1997. The most significant improvement was the addition of a 24-hour Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) component. Three courses were

conducted in 2019 for 68 students.



In November 2019 the Academy conducted the first **Pre-Trial Services & Misdemeanor Probation Officers Basic Course**. This group performs pretrial services and misdemeanor probation supervisory duties for several city and county courts in Montana. They are employed by cities or counties or can be employed by a business contracting these court ordered services. The Montana Public Safety Officer Standards and Training Council curriculum development committee created a 140-hour course that included 20 hours of on-line training. The course was led by both DOJ and DOC instructors.

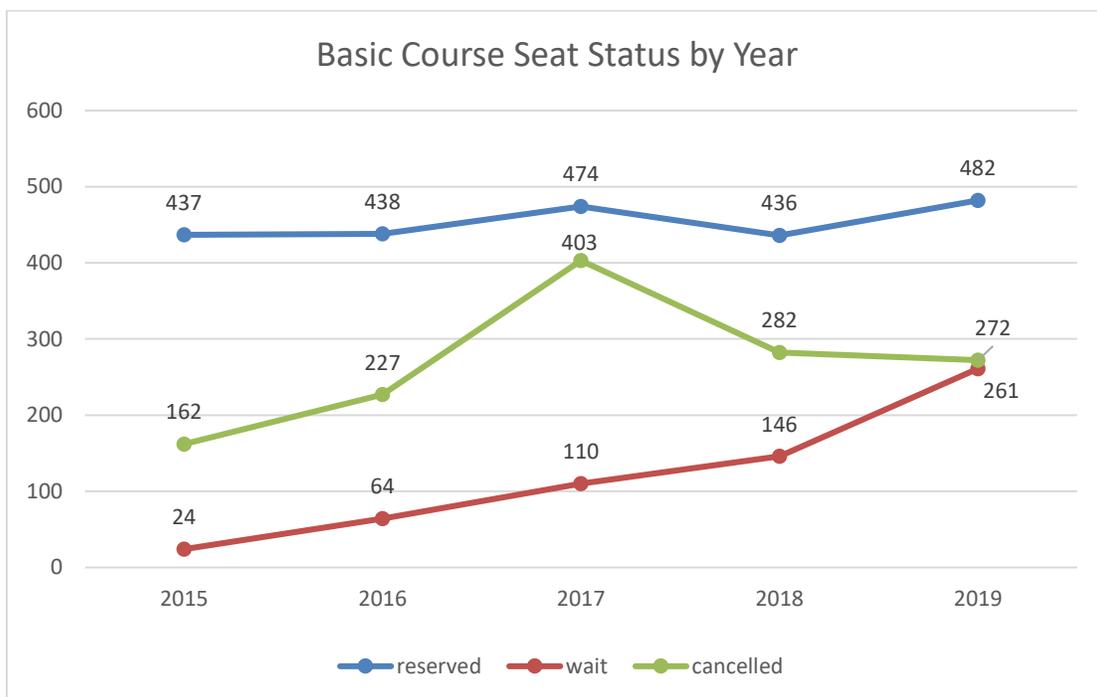
### Who Attended Basic Programs in 2019?

- The average age of a Law Enforcement Officer Basic Course student was 28 years with 22% reporting having some military service and 65% reporting having either some college or a degree.
- The average age of a Corrections/Detention Officer Basic Course student was 31 years with 16% reporting having some military service and 57% reporting having either some college or a degree.
- The average age of a Public Safety Communicator (dispatcher) Basic Course student was 34 years with 3% reporting having some military service and 78% reporting having either some college or a degree.

This year, 517 individuals attended the Montana Law Enforcement Academy's 15 basic courses.

Basic Course Title	Male	Female	City	County	State	Tribal Federal	Other
Adult Probation and Parole	12	11	0	4	23	0	0
Correction Officer Basic Course	164	49	0	128	83	2	0
Law Enforcement Officer Basic Course	176	22	81	69	38	10	0
Pre-Trial Services & Probation Services	6	9	10	5	0	0	0
Public Safety Communicator Basic Course	12	56	12	44	6	5	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>

The **Law Enforcement**, **Corrections/Detention** and **Public Safety Communicator** courses are the Academy’s three primary entry level basic certification programs required by Montana law. The graph below shows a comparison over the last five years for how many reserved training seats were conducted (blue), how many were on a wait list for the first course they did not get into (red), and how many were reserved, then cancelled, by the employing agency (green). Cancelled seats were filled from the wait list and are not reflected in the final year-end wait list total of those that could not get into the first course they registered for (red). As 2019 illustrated, even though the Academy conducted more basic courses the demand for seats also increased. The result is that agencies either waited longer for their new employees to be trained or waited longer to hire them. It’s important to note that most agencies received a reserved seat for the next available course and all agencies who requested a reserved training seat for a new employee received one within the statutorily required time.



## Academy Professional Programs

The Academy also provides several professional programs for existing law enforcement and public safety professionals. In 2019, 21 professional programs ranging from eight hours to 160 hours in length were conducted totaling 944 hours of instruction. Five hundred twenty-nine people attended an Academy

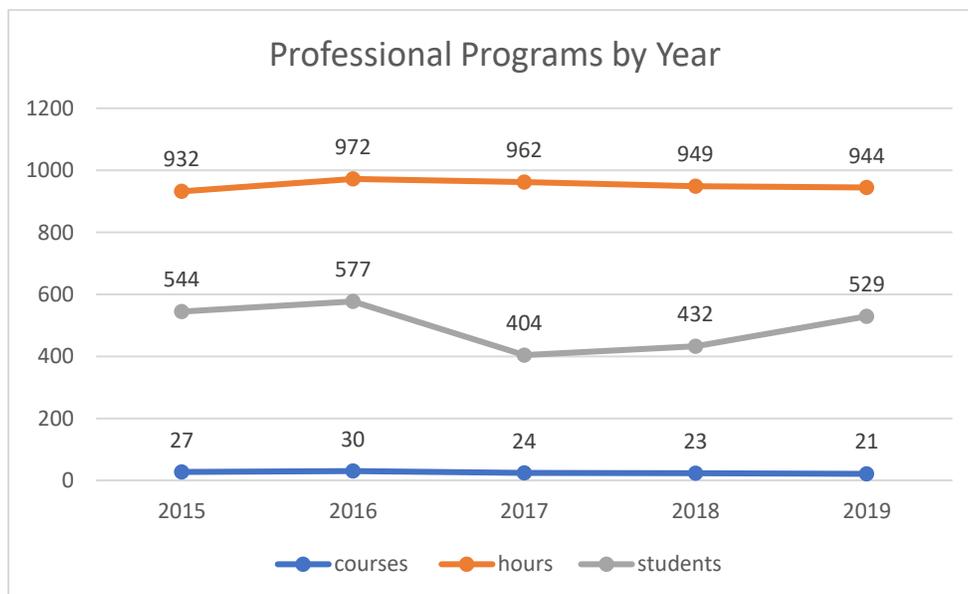
professional development program during the year. Topics included first line and mid-level management, executive leadership, defensive tactics instructor, firearms instructor, coroner training, police vehicle driving instructor, legal equivalency, and primary S.W.A.T.



Academy training officers are well respected for their technical expertise and frequently asked to provide regional training across the state. In 2019, staff conducted 40 regional trainings for 1,663 attendees. Topics included human trafficking, domestic violence, orders of protection, courtroom security,

interview skills, organizational leadership strategies, Constitutional law and Department of Transportation laws. The audiences ranged from local, state and federal agencies to the National Judges Association and even Dickinson State University in North Dakota. These courses were conducted at no cost to the requesting agencies.

The chart below is a five-year comparison showing the total number of courses, total number of hours, and total number of students trained per year (*does not include regional trainings*). Most of these professional courses occurred at the Academy.



## *Tribal Representation*

Registration for tribal students in Academy basic and professional programs is the same as for non-tribal agencies. Tribal law enforcement agencies can choose to send their new employees to either the BIA Academy in Artesia, New Mexico or the Montana Law Enforcement Academy. Seventeen students from Montana's seven reservations comprised 4% of the total student count for basic programs in 2019.

## *Summary*

In 2019, MLEA staff conducted more basic training programs for more students than in any of the previous five years. In addition to this noteworthy accomplishment, major facility renovations began in January, creating food service, dormitory, and training space restrictions as well. Logistical planning was a "moving target" as staff worked tirelessly to accommodate scheduled training needs. Training staff were exemplary in juggling multiple schedules while conducting outstanding training and simultaneously caring for students in Montana's unpredictable climate.

The Academy has become a place known for its beautiful setting and top-notch training facilities. This year, nearly 900 people from 24 different groups used our facilities for training over the course of 173 days. This is in addition to the basic and professional programs MLEA staff conduct. Continuing to improve MLEA facilities enhances the Department of Justice's ability to provide a cost-effective training venue for more than just Montana's public safety community.

## *A Look Ahead*

**Increase on-line learning components for MLEA basic programs:** Law enforcement academies around the country are moving to a blend of on-line training as well as traditional classroom learning. In 2019, the MLEA developed 24 hours of on-line training as part of the updated law enforcement officer basic course curriculum to be launched in January 2020. The inclusion of on-line courses in other basic programs will allow for increasing the content in the courses without increasing the residential requirement and provide greater flexibility in learning for students. This will require adding additional FTEs to manage the Academy's basic training on-line programs.

**Develop plans to fund and execute remaining phases of the Architecture & Engineering Master Plan; make infrastructure repairs not identified in the plan:** In the fall of 2020, the first three phases of the Montana Law Enforcement Academy Master Plan as prepared by the DOA Architecture & Engineering Division in 2016 will be complete. Developing a strategic plan to fund remaining phases will ensure the success of the overall master plan as written. Additionally, infrastructure repairs not identified in the plan also need attention. Examples

include deteriorating light poles, bridges, and roads on campus. Servicing the Academy's aging 66,000-gallon water tower is another major project that lies ahead.

**Assess staffing capabilities to better meet future training needs:** MLEA training and support staffing levels are lower today than 10 years ago. Reservations and associated wait lists continue to increase as the MLEA balances the delivery of basic and professional programs with current training and support staffing levels. The interim fix has been to increase law enforcement and corrections/detention basic course class sizes to accommodate agency needs and requirements for peace officers to complete a basic course within one year of their date of hire. While this approach increases the number of students who can be trained, it conflicts with the adult learning principal that small group instruction leads to better learning outcomes. It is also mentally and physically challenging as training and support staff work to accommodate larger class sizes and the overall number of students on campus.

